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VOL. XVII. NO. 22.

BLOOMFIELD, N. J., FRIDAY JULY 16, 1897.

PRICE THREE CENT

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

The price for advertisements in this column will be one cent for each word for not less than fifteen words. Advertisements should be received at this office before 10 o'clock Fridays.

FOR SALE—Lot on Glenwood Avenue, near Main St., Oranges, 25 ft. front, 100 ft. deep. Will be sold for \$150. Apply at "Record Office."

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RESIDENCE ON THOMAS

THE TRUE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

BY ELTWEEDE POMEROY, PRESIDENT NATIONAL DIRECT LEGISLATION LEAGUE.

When a form of government is put into operation in which interest coincides with justice, then rapidity of progress is only dependent on the intelligence, energy and experience of governors and governed.

If interest does not coincide with justice, such is the frailty of human nature that interest in time will triumph and a government founded on injustice will ensue. Such a government, no matter how splendid and powerful it may seem, bears within it the seeds of decay and death. Such was Spain at the height of her glory when the empire of Charles V. exceeded that of Rome. It is now crumbling and its people retrograding.

At times the innate righteousness of some ruler temporarily stops or even reverses the progress toward injustice, but with his death or apostasy the inevitable trend begins again. Such was the reign of the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius.

At times the framework of the government may have been so firmly knit that it requires a long period, perchance centuries, for the injustice to filter down to the masses, but when that happens the foundations of society are gone and dissolution follows. There are centuries in the early history of the Roman Empire when, while the heads were corrupt and unjust, the masses were governed in a stable and relatively just manner.

A government founded on injustice cannot permanently endure. Justice gives stability and permanency to a government. Interest is the motive or directing power. If the two do not coincide, interest directs it toward injustice, the government becomes unstable and finally something topples it over and anarchy ensues. But where interest—motive power—and justice—stability—coincide, progress is only dependent on the intelligence, energy and experience of governors and governed.

From this it follows that the supremely important question is: In what form of government does interest most nearly coincide with justice? Is it in a monarchy, where one man rules? No; because the interest of the one man does not always or even often coincide with justice to the subjects. Its advocates put out the doctrine of the divine right of kings to rule. Before it became too transparently absurd these rulers used to claim that they were descended from the gods and of a finer and different breed from the rest of mankind, who should serve and obey them. Such governments in time become either more unjust and decay or less monarchical and advance.

Does justice coincide with interest in an aristocracy, the government by a few? No; because it is the tendency of the few to use the powers for their own interest, even unjustly. They try to justify this by calling themselves aristocrats, or the best people, implying that the rest of the people should serve them. Hence such governments either become more and more unjust and retrograde or else they widen the governing body, become less aristocratic and unjust and more stable. The latter is largely the history of the English people.

Does justice coincide with interest in a representative government where the people choose, for longer or shorter periods, the rulers to govern them? The theory is that they choose the wisest and most trustworthy and that these officers, when chosen, retain and exercise these qualities.

At first, in this country, the answer seemed to be yes. The representatives elected frequently from a homogeneous and nearly equally wealthy people, and having comparatively few and simple problems to decide, responded readily to the popular will, and the beginning of a just and rapidly progressive government was made.

But as its functions became more and more varied and important and as the wealth of the country increased and concentrated, it soon became evident that the interest of the ruler after election did not coincide with justice to all the people. It either was or could easily be made the interest of a class, the corporations or organized wealthowners. The tradition of an ideal legislator for a time hindered the rapid domination of class interest and injustice. The enlarged publicity of the newspapers and modern life partially stopped it. The frequency of elections retards the most gross and open corruptionists, but not the subtlest and most dangerous. This tradition is well nigh dead and the legislators have thrown up a great cloud of laws and vastly increased the complexity of public business that they may hide themselves from this publicity.

Because of this corruption, we are fast progressing toward injustice and instability in our government. The evidence of this is the recent civil wars at Homestead, Chicago, Coeur d'Alene, etc. Smothering these is not curing the disease, but sitting on the safety valve. The famous French scholar, LeClerc, an impartial observer, says: "On one side the revolutionary masses blinded by anger, and on the other the most corrupting and monstrous evolution of millionaires and monopolists." The underlying reason is that justice does not coincide with interest in our government, and so interest directs and our government becomes unjust.

Representative government has been tested on these shores for over a century. In many cases it is better than the older forms. It has been acclaimed a finality. But it has borne its legitimate fruits, and they are the dead sea apples of corruption and insidious injustice. Representative government is a failure.

If we pursue the path we now are treading, a strong government, buttressed by force, is necessary, and that will be followed by anarchy, death, retrogression.

Interest coincides with justice, not in government, but in self-government; not in any form of rule by others, but in pure democracy, where the people rule themselves. Where the people vote or are able to vote on every law by which they are to be governed, then interest coincides with justice. Where each man has to decide both what is due from himself to others and to the state and also to himself from others and from the state, then it is to his interest that that decision should be just. He may err through lack of understanding, but experience will remedy that. He will not err because it is to his interest to oppress others because the others will have an equal voice with him in making the laws.

When true democracy or self-government is achieved, progress will only depend on the intelligence, energy and experience of the governors, who are also the governed. By uniting the two classes, governors and governed, and making them the same, we make interest coincide with justice. These two cannot coincide as long as the governors are not the same as the governed.

Law is largely a matter of definitions—definitions of the rights and duties of each to the other and to the state. In the manipulation of these definitions lurks much of the injustice of our present government. If the making of these definitions is left to one man, a king, or to a few men chosen by birth, an hereditary aristocracy, these definitions are made in the interest of the makers. If it is left without check to a few men elected by the people, a representative government, then these definitions are made in the interest of those men who persuade or purchase a majority of the representatives. The first is oftentimes an honest oppression, as it is very easy for a man or a set of men to persuade themselves that they are better than their neighbors and hence entitled to more consideration. The latter is always dishonest and adds that evil to its oppression and injustice.

Leave the final decision on these definitions to the whole people and each man or class in the community will not ask less than justice for themselves and the whole community will be unwilling to grant more than justice to any part of it. Interest coincides with justice.

This can be attained through Direct Legislation, the Initiative and Referendum. By the Initiative a reasonable minority of the voters, say five per cent, can propose any measure as a law, and this proposal, after discussion and amendment, both in legislative halls and before the people, goes to a vote of the people. By the Referendum, any law passed by the legislative council, when petitioned for by a reasonable minority of the voters, say five per cent., is referred to a vote of the people interested for acceptance or rejection.

Transcending and embracing all questions of the finance, the tariff, taxation, etc., is this fundamental one, shall the people rule or be ruled? Shall organized wealth, with its subtle corruption, govern the people or shall the people govern themselves through Direct Legislation? Other questions are but a part of this great question. Let us by Direct Legislation, make justice coincide with interest in our government, thus gaining stability and progress.

Settle it and the solution of all other questions will follow in time and with experience. Leave it unsettled and other reforms can only be attained by entangling alliances and concessions which render a triumph of the reform largely nugatory. Meantime a rapid and largely unrecorded progress toward injustice will make this fundamental reform more difficult.—From The New Time.

THAT AWFUL WIRE FENCE.

It blisters the Landscape and Bother the Commuters.

A stranger visiting this town for the first time, upon alighting from the train on the Erie Branch at the Glen Ridge station, is confronted by a six foot fence, covered with barbarous wire, enclosing two sides of the large three-cornered plot of ground close up to the railroad and street lines. The visitor's first inquiry naturally would be: "For what purpose is that horrid fence?" "Is there a lunatic asylum here, or a prison that must be shut in in this manner?"

The stranger can get no very satisfactory answer.

To everybody (except the builders) the fence is a conundrum.

Early in the spring, when the triangle was first being plowed up, a citizen who stood by and appeared to be superintending the job, was asked: "What are you going to plant there?" The astute citizen paused, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets, with a facetious smile said: "Railroad spikes."

No better or more satisfactory answer has been given so far as THE RECORD knows, to other numerous inquiries that have been made touching the why and wherefore of the fence.

To throw some light upon it, the records of the Township of Bloomfield have been examined, and from these it appears conclusive that there are two distinct private interests sought to be served by the erection of this fence. Other facts of more recent occurrence in the administration of Glen Ridge Borough go to show that private spite has a good deal to do with the shutting off of the short cut from Forest Avenue to the railroad station.

It is the province, and intention of this paper, however, to discuss only the main issues involved—namely the rights of the public in two important avenues of the township.

It is more important as the beautiful district opened up by said avenues is filled up with residences.

The records show that Benson Street, running east from Broad Street to Highland Avenue, was surveyed and thrown open to the public in 1869. Forest Avenue was opened about the same time along Chestnut Hill crest. It started at Bay Lane and ended by intersection with Benson Street. The first house built upon either of these avenues was that of the publisher of this newspaper, which was erected in 1870. The next was the De Gress residence on Forest Avenue.

The Montclair Railroad was surveyed and built a few years later. It cut through Benson Street by a diagonal line in such a way that when bridges were subsequently built, the bridge over Benson Street extended to Forest Avenue, and the two were thus connected. The Railroad Company built those bridges and others reluctantly, under compulsion of the township authorities, claiming that as there were as yet few improvements upon the streets no bridges were yet needed. The temporary bridges that were built, however, were used by the public as long as they existed, but mostly for foot travel, as the bridges were not kept in repair. Complaints were made, and in 1889 the Grand Jury of Essex County presented bills of indictment against the Company for neglecting to maintain its bridges over the cut at Benson Street and Forest Avenue.

In June, 1890, it was proposed to extend Osborne Street from its terminus in Forest Avenue to Ridgewood Avenue, the effect of which would be to make Osborne Street an outlet from Bloomfield to Glen Ridge and Montclair instead of Benson Street, which was practically ruined as a thoroughfare because of the railroad cutting it diagonally, and the impossibility of building a convenient bridge at this point. It was proposed that the Railroad Company should pay the expenses of opening Osborne Street through to Ridgewood Avenue, and in consideration thereof proceedings under the indictment cease, and the company be relieved of the obligation to maintain the bridges. The company acceded to this, but it was not until January 25, 1891, that an agreement was entered into as follows:

This agreement dated January 15, 1891, between the inhabitants of the Township of Bloomfield, hereafter termed the Township of the first part and the New York and Greenwood Lake Railroad Co. hereafter termed the Company party of the second part.

Whereas the Company desire to be relieved from all question as to their obligation to maintain bridges over their track at Forest Avenue and Benson Street, and the Township deem it for the public advantage that said bridges be discontinued if Osborne Street be opened and extended from Forest Avenue to Ridgewood Avenue as shown on a map prepared by James Owen, dated Dec. 30, 1890, a copy of which is hereto annexed, and the Company is willing to pay not to exceed two thousand

dollars for the purpose of securing the discontinuance of said bridges and the opening of said streets, and Henry Meuser and Vincent Mechie, owners of the land required for such extension, have signed contracts to sell same for seventeen hundred and fifty, and said Company has advanced one hundred dollars on said contract.

Now therefore it is hereby agreed that the Township will take immediate steps to secure the vacation of such portions of Forest Avenue and Benson Street as are upon the right of way of said railroad, and in consideration thereof the Company when said streets are vacated will assign all benefits of said contracts as may be requested by said Township and will pay the balance due thereon, and also will pay not to exceed two hundred and fifty dollars for expenses of opening and vacating said streets, making not over two thousand dollars in all.

From the above it is seen that so much only of Forest Avenue and of Benson Street as the railroad owns and controls for its right of way has been vacated. It also appears to be plain that the company has acquired a legal right to fence off Benson Street from the railroad cut, and Forest Avenue also. In exercise of this right the company has declined to favor the use of even a sidewalk along the cut from that direction. This is a hardship to those commuters who do not care to take their chance of slipping down the steep bank of being torn by the barbs of the wire fence that says, "Keep off!" As new residences are built north of the track the dissatisfaction will increase.

It certainly is unreasonable to expect commuters to travel clear around Wildwood Terrace, or down Osborne Street to Essex Avenue, and from thence up to the Station. The proposed new street from Osborne Street to Benson St. and Wildwood Terrace would make the station convenient to many but it would be necessary to buy land for the purpose. This leads me to remark that in view of present difficulties it was short-sighted on the part of the Township to yield an inch of the public right to Benson Street and Forest Avenue in 1891. A manifest injustice was done to every property owner on those streets when the dicker between the railroad company and the township and the Forest Avenue and cut Benson Street in two in the middle—a street otherwise destined to become an important one, running directly from Broad Street to Highland Avenue. Those who gave it to the public thirty years ago meant it for a fine avenue, but it has been ruined as such. Nothing is so important to a community's future as wide streets and public parks; and when citizens have freely given land for public use it should never get back into private hands. It may be too late now to recover so much as the use of a few feet from the railroad to maintain the "short cut" to the station, though if it can be done it should be. Meantime the Borough authorities should guard all the public land remaining in these streets and prevent an inch of it from being appropriated or controlled for private uses.

Now is the time, if ever, to call a halt and make Glen Ridge station here what it ought to be, accessible and convenient. The Borough Council should arrange with the railroad company for a plank road way to connect Benson Street with Ridgewood Avenue. As it is now, a driver or wheelman, in order to get directly from Broad and Benson Street up to Glen Ridge or Montclair, or come from that direction to Bloomfield, must make one of the most dangerous railroad crossings in this vicinity—that at Wildwood Terrace. Would not the railroad company, rather than maintain gates there, as soon they must, consent to the continuation of Benson Street, along the cut to Ridgewood Avenue?

Edward S. Wilde, as I understand, gave the land for the station, and to him much is due for it as a unique and pretty structure. He also gave the land for Wildwood Terrace, rather than have Forest Avenue extended through his property. By thus opening Wildwood Terrace, a fine approach to the station was made from that direction, and a splendid market made for real estate south of the railroad. But there is property north of the railroad also entitled to be benefited, and I can hardly believe that my friend Wilde, much as he professes to admire the tall fence along the railroad bank, is so narrow in his devotional spirit as the man who prayed:

"God bless me and my son John; my wife and my wife; we four and no more."

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